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Douglas A. Wright
(202) 254-7230

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# PATRON USE OF COMPUTERS IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

In winter 1984-85, about 15 percent of all public library systems in the Nation had computers for patron use inside the library, and 4 percent had computers for loan or use outside the library. In all, 18 percent of the systems had computers for patron use (e.g., for instruction, word processing, games) either inside or outside the library.[1] These are some of the findings from a recent survey of public library systems conducted by the Center for Statistics (CS) through its Fast Response Survey System.

## Number of Library Systems with Computers

For this survey, a library system was defined as a main library with its branches, if any, administered by a single director under a unified budget. Of the 8,500 public library systems in the Nation, most systems (84 percent) consist of a single library, while the remaining library systems contain one or more branches--a total of 15,000 main and branch libraries.[2] Most of the data presented in this report pertain to library systems as a whole; some data are reported separately for main and branch libraries. For additional information on the universe of public library systems, see table 9. All statements of comparison made in the text are significant at the 90 percent confidence level or better (table 10).

In library systems, computer availability for patron use varied by size of the population served[3] (table 1): 42 percent of the systems serving large populations (100,000 or more people) had computers for patron use, compared with 26 percent of the systems serving medium-sized populations (10,000 - 100,000 people) and 13 percent of the systems serving small populations (fewer than 10,000 people), hereafter called large, medium-sized, and small systems, respectively. While large systems were more likely than smaller systems to have at least one computer, main and branch libraries in large systems were no more likely to have computers than were main and branch libraries in smaller systems (table 1). For example, only 12 percent of the main and branch libraries in large systems had computers for use inside the library. This proportion was similar to those for main and branch libraries in medium-sized systems (13 percent) and small systems (10 percent).

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## Number of Computers Available

An estimated 3,300 computers were available for patrons' use in the Nation's public libraries in winter 1984-85. Three-fourths were available for use inside the library, while one-fourth could be checked out of the library for loan (table 2). About half of all computers were in medium-sized library systems; the remainder were divided almost evenly between small and large systems.

Library systems with computers had an average of 2.1 patron-use computers: 62 percent had one computer, 27 percent had two or three, and only 12 percent had four or more (percents are rounded). The average number of patron-use computers ranged from 1.3 in small systems to 4.6 in large systems. The size difference disappeared for computers available inside libraries when branch libraries were included (1.1 to 1.6 computers per main and branch library with computers).

## Sources of Computers

About half of all computers for patron use were purchased primarily with State or local funds, and one-third were obtained through gifts. Federal funds or grants were used to purchase 10 percent, while the remaining 10 percent were either leased, loaned, or obtained by other means (table 3). Small library systems obtained 60 percent of their patron-use computers through State or local funds, whereas large systems obtained 32 percent of their computers in that way.

## Characteristics of Patron Use of Computers

Data were collected on: the length of time patrons were allowed to use computers; charges, if any, for computer use; the amount of computer usage per week; and the percent of patrons 18 years old or over. These data were obtained separately for computer use inside and outside the library. Data on computers for loan are based on a small number of library systems and, therefore, are subject to large sampling variability. For this reason, only national estimates are reported.

### Patron Use Inside the Library

Patrons used computers inside public libraries for a total of 52,000 hours a week (not shown in tables), or about 23 hours per computer per week (table 4). This usage varied greatly among library systems: in about one-fifth, computers were used 5 hours a week or less, while in another one-fifth, usage averaged 35 hours or more (not shown in tables). Computers in medium-sized and large library systems were more heavily used (26 and 25 hours per week) than those in small systems (17 hours).

Nationally, 71 percent of the patrons using computers inside libraries were under 18 years old (table 4). Proportionately more patrons under 18 used computers in small systems (81 percent) than in medium-sized (66 percent) and large systems (56 percent).



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ABSTRACT

A survey was conducted to determine the extent to which public libraries have made computer hardware and software available to their patrons. In December 1984, questionnaires were distributed to a stratified national probability sample of 900 public library systems. Results, based on a response rate of 99%, indicate that: (1) 42% of the systems serving large populations (100,000 or more) had computers for patron use, compared with 26% for medium-sized populations (10,000-100,000), and 13% for small populations (fewer than 10,000); (2) an estimated 3,300 computers were available for use in the nation's libraries; three-fourths were situated inside the library while one-fourth could be checked out for loan; (3) about half of all computers were purchased primarily with state or local funds, and one-third were obtained through gifts; (4) patrons used computers inside public libraries for a total of 52,000 hours a week, or about 23 hours per computer per week; (5) 71% of the patrons using computers inside libraries were under 18 years old, but only 30% of outside users were; (6) the typical loan period allowed for computers taken outside the library was one week (67% of systems); (7) 9 out of 10 library systems that provided computers also had computer software for use inside or outside the library; and (8) about one-half of the library systems with computers offered training or orientation sessions. Libraries also indicated a high priority for initiating or increasing hardware and software availability and the number of staff trained to assist patrons. Ten data tables and a copy of the questionnaire are provided. (JB)

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Generally, patrons could schedule computer use for an hour at a time (72 percent of systems).[4] Most libraries (77 percent) did not charge for computer use; those that had a fee charged an average of $1.70 per hour (not shown in tables).

Patron Use Outside the Library

The typical loan period allowed for computers taken outside the library was 1 week (67 percent of systems).[4] Three-fourths of the computers for loan were checked out once a week, and 12 percent were checked out twice a week on the average. As with computer use inside libraries, most library systems (83 percent) did not charge for computer loan (not shown in tables).

The data show a striking age difference between users in and outside the library. While 71 percent using computers in the library were under 18, only 30 percent of outside users were. This finding may be a result of libraries' loan policies requiring that only adults can check out computers.

Availability of Computer Software

Nine out of 10 library systems that provided computers also had computer software for use inside or outside the library. In addition, a small number of systems without computers had software for loan (not shown in tables). Nationally, 17 percent of the systems had computer software: 15 percent for use inside the library and 4 percent for loan.[5] As with computer hardware, proportionately more large systems provided software than did medium-sized or small systems (table 5).

The most available types of software were (table 5):

- Instruction or instructional games (other than basic skills) for persons under 18 years old (78 percent of library systems with software);
- Skill training and personal use, e.g., accounting and word processing (77 percent);
- Introduction to computer concepts and computer science (71 percent); and
- Basic skills (reading, writing, math) for persons under 18 years old (61 percent).

Video games for entertainment, adult literacy software, and software for searching free data bases were less available. In addition, librarians in three-fourths of the systems with software reported that patrons used their own software.

When available in library systems, video games were heavily used or borrowed (table 6): 56 percent of the systems reported heavy usage and 30 percent reported moderate usage. However, only one-third of the library



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systems with software stocked video games. Instructional software (other than basic skills) for persons under 18 years old was also in demand: 36 percent of the systems with this software reported heavy usage; 48 percent, moderate usage.

Training Sessions

About half the library systems with computers for patron use offered training or orientation sessions in 1984 (table 4). Library systems with training sessions provided an average of 35 such sessions, each lasting about an hour. Proportionately more large systems provided training sessions than did small systems. Large systems also offered more training sessions.

Plans for 1985

To foster their patrons' use of computers, between 17 and 26 percent of the library systems placed a high or moderate priority on initiating or increasing (table 7):

- The number and variety of software (26 percent);
- Efforts to promote patron use of computers (22 percent);
- The number of computers for patron use (20 percent);
- Training sessions on the use of computers (18 percent); and
- The number of staff trained to assist patrons with computers (17 percent).

A greater proportion of large systems than medium-sized or small systems gave each plan a moderate or high priority.

Library systems with computers placed a higher priority on initiating or increasing computer-related services as compared with library systems that had no computers (table 8). For example, 34 percent of the library systems with computers planned to increase their number of computers, while 17 percent of those without computers planned to start providing computers for patron use.

The findings presented above provide a snapshot of patron use of computers in public libraries in winter 1984-85. If all systems with moderate or high priority plans for initiating such use actually implement these plans, the public will have access to computers in 32 percent of all library systems.

Survey Background

The purpose of this survey was to gather information on the extent to which public libraries have made computer hardware and software available to the public. The findings will assist public libraries in their efforts to initiate or expand their computer-related services to the public.



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This survey was performed through a contract with Westat, a research firm in Rockville, Maryland, using the Fast Response Survey System (FRSS). FRSS was established to collect small quantities of data, needed for education planning and policy formulation, quickly and with minimum burden on respondents.

In December 1984, the survey form (a copy of which is attached) was mailed to a stratified national probability sample of 900 public library systems. The sample was drawn with probability proportional to the square root of population served from the universe of 8,537 public library systems in the Nation. Data collection was completed in February 1985 with a response rate of 99 percent. The data were adjusted for questionnaire nonresponse and weighted to national totals. Standard errors for selected items are presented in table 10 as a general guide to the precision of numbers in the tables.

The following people contributed to this study: Elizabeth Farris (Westat); Jeanette Goor (consultant); Robert L. Thomas (CS); Dorothy Kittel and Milbrey Jones (Center for Libraries and Education Improvement).

## For More Information

For information about this survey or the Fast Response Survey System, contact Douglas Wright, Center for Statistics, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Washington, D.C. 20208, telephone (202) 254-7230. For single copies of this bulletin, contact the Information Office, at the same address, or telephone (202) 254-6057.



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Notes

[1]Computers were defined as mainframes, microcomputers or personal computers, and terminals. Less than 2 percent of library systems had computers for use both inside and outside the library (percents have been rounded).

[2]The source for the number of library systems was the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, LIBGIS file for 1981. The number of main and branch libraries was estimated from the survey.

[3]Survey data were analyzed by size of population served, metropolitan status (urban, suburban, and rural), and region. Estimates based on size and metropolitan status are similar because these characteristics are related. For example, three-fourths of the library systems serving 10,000 people or fewer are rural, while almost two-thirds of the systems serving 100,000 or more people are in urban areas. In this report, findings are reported by size of population served, although estimates by metropolitan status and region are included in tables. A few regional differences occurred, e.g., computers were used less frequently in the Southeast than in other regions; however, no consistent pattern emerged.

[4]About 6 percent of the library systems with computers for use inside the library and 2 percent of those with computers for loan reported no time limit for computer usage.

[5]Two percent had software for use inside the library and for loan.



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Table 1.--Public libraries with computers for patron use, by size of population served, metropolitan status, and region: 50 States and D.C., winter 1984-85

| Library system characteristic | Computer use in library systems[1] | | | Computer use in main and branch libraries[2] | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | All | Use in library | Use outside library | Use in library | Use outside library |
| | Percent | | | | |
| Total | 18 | 15 | 4 | 12 | 3 |
| **Size of population served** | | | | | |
| Less than 10,000 | 13 | 10 | 4 | 10 | 4 |
| 10,000 to 99,999 | 26 | 23 | 6 | 13 | 3 |
| 100,000 or more | 42 | 41 | 3 | 12 | (*) |
| **Metropolitan status** | | | | | |
| Rural | 13 | 11 | 4 | 9 | 3 |
| Suburban | 24 | 19 | 6 | 14 | 4 |
| Urban | 42 | 41 | 3 | 14 | 1 |
| **Region** | | | | | |
| North Atlantic | 21 | 13 | 9 | 9 | 6 |
| Great Lakes and Plains | 16 | 16 | 3 | 14 | 2 |
| Southeast | 17 | 16 | 1 | 12 | (*) |
| West and Southwest | 19 | 18 | 2 | 12 | 1 |

*Less than 1 percent.

[1]Library systems were defined as a single unit, or a multiunit organization having branches and other outlets administered by a single director under a unified budget. There were 8,537 such systems. Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, LIBGIS file, 1981. For further details about library systems and main and branch libraries, see table 9.

[2]The number of main and branch libraries (15,000) was estimated from the survey.



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Table 2.--Computers available for patron use in public libraries, by size of population served, metropolitan status, and region: 50 States and D.C., winter 1984-85

| Library system characteristic | Number of computers[1] | Percent of computers available inside library | Average number of computers | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Per library system with computers | Per main and branch library with computers | |
| | | | | For use inside library | For use outside library |
| Total | 3,300 | 75 | 2.1 | 1.4 | 2.0 |
| **Size of population served** | | | | | |
| Less than 10,000 | 900 | 68 | 1.3 | 1.1 | (2) |
| 10,000 to 99,999 | 1,600 | 73 | 2.3 | 1.6 | (2) |
| 100,000 or more | 800 | 88 | 4.6 | 1.5 | (2) |
| **Metropolitan status** | | | | | |
| Rural | 1,000 | 74 | 1.5 | 1.2 | (2) |
| Suburban | 1,600 | 72 | 2.3 | 1.7 | (2) |
| Urban | 600 | 88 | 3.9 | 1.4 | (2) |
| **Region** | | | | | |
| North Atlantic | 900 | 57 | 1.6 | 1.4 | (2) |
| Great Lakes and Plains | 1,200 | 80 | 2.1 | 1.4 | (2) |
| Southeast | 400 | 91 | 2.4 | 1.1 | (2) |
| West and Southwest | 800 | 82 | 3.0 | 1.7 | (2) |

[1]These figures have been rounded; however, percents have been calculated on the estimates, not the rounded figures.

[2]Estimates are not reported because they are based on a small number of library systems and, therefore, are subject to large sampling variability.

NOTE.--Details may not add to totals because of rounding.



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Table 3.--Public library computers for patron use obtained through various sources, by size of population served, metropolitan status, and region: 50 States and D.C., winter 1984-85

| Library system characteristic | Local or State funds or grants | Gifts from benefactor or company | Federal funds or grants | Leased from a company | Loaned by a private firm | Other[1] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Percent | | | |
| Total | 47 | 34 | 10 | 4 | 2 | 4 |
| **Size of population served** | | | | | | |
| Less than 10,000 | 60 | 25 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 6 |
| 10,000 to 99,999 | 47 | 38 | 8 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| 100,000 or more | 32 | 36 | 20 | 8 | 3 | 1 |
| **Metropolitan status** | | | | | | |
| Rural | 45 | 33 | 13 | 1 | 2 | 5 |
| Suburban | 54 | 35 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 4 |
| Urban | 32 | 34 | 25 | 6 | 2 | 1 |
| **Region** | | | | | | |
| North Atlantic | 47 | 41 | 2 | 4 | (2) | 6 |
| Great Lakes and Plains | 53 | 35 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| Southeast | 28 | 21 | 41 | 10 | 1 | 0 |
| West and Southwest | 46 | 32 | 13 | 3 | 3 | 3 |

[1]Other methods included loans from schools, community colleges, and individuals.

[2]Less than 1 percent.

NOTE.--Percents may not add to 100 because of rounding.



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Table 4.--Patron use of computers in public library systems and training sessions in computer use, by size of population served, metropolitan status, and region: 50 States and D.C., winter 1984-85

| Library system characteristic | Average use per week per computer inside library[1] (in hours) | Average percent of users under 18 years old | | Training sessions | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Use inside library | Use outside library | Percent of systems offering[1] | Average number in 1984[2] | Average duration (in minutes) |
| Total | 23.3 | 71 | 30 | 48 | 35 | 64 |
| **Size of population served** | | | | | | |
| Less than 10,000 | 16.9 | 81 | (*) | 32 | 18 | 63 |
| 10,000 to 99,999 | 26.0 | 66 | (*) | 59 | 39 | 61 |
| 100,000 or more | 25.2 | 56 | (*) | 64 | 56 | 74 |
| **Metropolitan status** | | | | | | |
| Rural | 17.3 | 77 | (*) | 34 | 35 | 63 |
| Suburban | 27.5 | 70 | (*) | 60 | 35 | 62 |
| Urban | 23.1 | 53 | (*) | 57 | 33 | 74 |
| **Region** | | | | | | |
| North Atlantic | 21.9 | 72 | (*) | 49 | 28 | 55 |
| Great Lakes and Plains | 26.6 | 71 | (*) | 41 | 44 | 69 |
| Southeast | 12.5 | 71 | (*) | 74 | 21 | 80 |
| West and Southwest | 25.5 | 70 | (*) | 41 | 46 | 54 |

*Estimates are not reported because they are based on a small number of systems and therefore, are subject to large sampling variability.

[1]Based on library systems with computers for patron use.

[2]Based on library systems with training sessions.



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Table 5.--Public library systems with software for patron use, by type of software, size of population served, metropolitan status, and region: 50 States and D.C., winter 1984-85

| Library system characteristic | Any software[1] | Type of software[2] | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Other instructional software[3] | Skill training or personal use | Introduction to computers | Basic skills | Video games | Adult literacy | Data bases |
| | Percent | | | | | | | |
| Total | 17 | 78 | 77 | 71 | 61 | 31 | 18 | 6 |
| **Size of population served** | | | | | | | | |
| Less than 10,000 | 12 | 70 | 73 | 67 | 58 | 30 | 15 | 3 |
| 10,000 to 99,999 | 24 | 84 | 76 | 73 | 62 | 28 | 19 | 7 |
| 100,000 or more | 42 | 81 | 91 | 81 | 69 | 41 | 30 | 16 |
| **Metropolitan status** | | | | | | | | |
| Rural | 13 | 75 | 71 | 65 | 54 | 35 | 18 | 5 |
| Suburban | 22 | 78 | 79 | 74 | 66 | 25 | 16 | 7 |
| Urban | 40 | 82 | 88 | 82 | 67 | 36 | 32 | 10 |
| **Region** | | | | | | | | |
| North Atlantic | 16 | 75 | 67 | 76 | 51 | 33 | 10 | 8 |
| Great Lakes and Plains | 17 | 77 | 76 | 70 | 62 | 30 | 26 | 6 |
| Southeast | 16 | 83 | 85 | 57 | 71 | 32 | 12 | 6 |
| West and Southwest | 19 | 79 | 89 | 73 | 68 | 27 | 20 | 5 |

[1]Based on all library systems.

[2]Based on library systems with software for use inside or outside the library.

[3]Instructional software or games (other than basic skills) for persons under 18 years old.



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Table 6.--Availability of different types of software and frequency of usage in public library systems: 50 States and D.C., winter 1984-85

| Type of software | Percent of library systems | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | With the software[1] | Indicating heavy usage[2] | Indicating moderate usage[2] | Indicating light usage[2] |
| Instructional software or games (other than basic skills) for persons under 18 years old . . . . . | 78 | 36 | 48 | 16 |
| Skill training or personal use (e.g., accounting, word processing) . . . . . | 77 | 20 | 38 | 42 |
| Introduction to computer concepts or computer science. . . . . | 71 | 22 | 41 | 37 |
| Basic skills (reading, writing, math) for persons under 18 years old . . . . | 61 | 23 | 47 | 30 |
| Video games for entertainment . . . . . | 31 | 56 | 30 | 14 |
| Instructional software for adult literacy . . . . | 18 | 12 | 35 | 53 |
| Search by patron of free data bases (e.g., community information) . . | 6 | 18 | 65 | 18 |
| Patron's own software. . . . | - | 18 | 34 | 48 |

- Not applicable.

[1]Based on library systems with software for use inside or outside the library.

[2]Based on library systems with the specific software. Percents may not add to 100 because of rounding.



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Table 7.--Public library systems with high or moderate priority plans to initiate or increase a program of computers for patron use, by size of population served, metropolitan status, and region: 50 States and D.C., winter 1984-85

| Library system characteristic | Plan to initiate or increase | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number or variety of software | Efforts to promote patron use of computers | Number of computers for patron use | Offerings of training sessions | Number of trained staff to assist patrons |
| | Percent | | | | |
| Total | 26 | 22 | 20 | 18 | 17 |
| **Size of population served** | | | | | |
| Less than 10,000 | 19 | 16 | 14 | 11 | 11 |
| 10,000 to 99,999 | 37 | 31 | 30 | 28 | 27 |
| 100,000 or more | 54 | 44 | 43 | 43 | 39 |
| **Metropolitan status** | | | | | |
| Rural | 20 | 16 | 15 | 13 | 12 |
| Suburban | 33 | 30 | 26 | 24 | 24 |
| Urban | 52 | 37 | 39 | 39 | 36 |
| **Region** | | | | | |
| North Atlantic | 27 | 20 | 19 | 18 | 16 |
| Great Lakes and Plains | 29 | 24 | 24 | 18 | 20 |
| Southeast | 23 | 24 | 19 | 21 | 17 |
| West and Southwest | 21 | 19 | 14 | 14 | 15 |



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Table 8.--Public library systems with high or moderate priority plans to initiate or increase a program of computers for patron use, by whether or not they have such computers: 50 States and D.C., winter 1984-85

| Plan to initiate or increase | Systems with computers for patron use (plan to increase)[1] | Systems without computers for patron use (plan to initiate)[2] |
|---|---|---|
| | Percent | |
| Number or variety of software | 75 | 15 |
| Efforts to promote patron use of computers | 58 | 14 |
| Number of computers for patron use | 34 | 17 |
| Offerings of training sessions | 43 | 12 |
| Number of trained staff to assist patrons | 37 | 13 |

[1]Based on an estimated 1,553 library systems that have computers for patron use.

[2]Based on an estimated 6,984 library systems that do not have computers for patron use.



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Table 9.--Distribution of public libraries, and population served, by size of population served, metropolitan status, and region

| Library system characteristic | Library systems[1] | | Main and branch libraries[2] | | Population served[1] (in millions) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | |
| Total | 8,537 | 100 | 15,000 | 100 | 225.1 |
| **Size of population served** | | | | | |
| Less than 10,000 | 5,447 | 64 | 5,800 | 39 | 17.4 |
| 10,000 to 99,999 | 2,697 | 32 | 5,200 | 35 | 83.5 |
| 100,000 or more | 394 | 5 | 4,000 | 26 | 124.1 |
| **Metropolitan status** | | | | | |
| Rural | 5,221 | 61 | 7,100 | 47 | 47.6 |
| Suburban | 2,914 | 34 | 4,900 | 33 | 80.7 |
| Urban | 403 | 5 | 3,000 | 20 | 96.8 |
| **Region** | | | | | |
| North Atlantic | 2,709 | 32 | 4,200 | 28 | 53.6 |
| Great Lakes and Plains | 3,498 | 41 | 4,800 | 32 | 52.1 |
| Southeast | 1,003 | 12 | 2,800 | 18 | 57.2 |
| West and Southwest | 1,328 | 16 | 3,200 | 22 | 62.2 |

[1]Defined as a single unit, or as a multiunit organization having branches and other outlets administered by a single director under a unified budget. Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, LIBGIS file, 1981. Data on population served also were obtained from this file.

[2]Estimated from the survey. Since these figures are estimates, they have been rounded. However, percents have been calculated on the estimates, not the rounded figures.

NOTE.--Details may not add to totals because of rounding.



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Table 10.--Standard errors of selected items

| Item | Estimate | Standard error |
|---|---|---|
| Percent of library systems with computers for patron use inside or outside the library: | | |
| All library systems | 18.2 | 1.6 |
| Small library systems | 12.8 | 2.5 |
| Large library systems | 42.1 | 3.2 |
| Percent of all main and branch libraries with computers for use inside the library | 11.6 | 1.0 |
| Average number of computers per library system with computers: | | |
| All library systems | 2.1 | .2 |
| Small library systems | 1.3 | .1 |
| Medium-sized library systems | 2.3 | .2 |
| Large library systems | 4.6 | .5 |
| Percent of all patron-use computers obtained: | | |
| Through State or local library funds | 46.7 | 4.2 |
| As gifts | 33.9 | 4.2 |
| Through Federal funds or grants | 10.0 | 2.8 |
| Average number of hours of use per computer per week: | | |
| All library systems | 23.3 | 1.6 |
| Small library systems | 16.9 | 2.5 |
| Large library systems | 25.2 | 2.7 |
| Average percent of patrons using computers inside libraries who are 18 years old or over: | | |
| All library systems | 28.9 | 1.8 |
| Small library systems | 18.8 | 3.1 |
| Large library systems | 43.9 | 3.2 |
| Percent of library systems with computers for patron use providing training sessions on the use of computers | 47.7 | 4.2 |
| Average number of training sessions offered | 34.9 | 5.9 |
| Percent of library systems with software for patron use inside or outside the library | 17.1 | 1.5 |
| Percent of library systems with software providing patrons with: | | |
| Other instructional software for persons under 18 years old | 77.7 | 5.0 |
| Basic skills (reading, writing, math) for persons under 18 years old | 60.9 | 4.5 |
| Video games for entertainment | 30.8 | 4.2 |

NOTE.--Statistics used in this report are subject to sampling variability. The estimated standard error of a statistic (a measure of the variation due to sampling) can be used to examine the precision obtained in a particular sample. If all possible samples were surveyed under similar conditions, intervals of 1.645 standard errors below to 1.645 standard errors above a particular statistic would include the average result of these samples in approximately 90 percent of the cases. For example, for the first item in the table (percent of all library systems having computers for patron use), a 90 percent confidence interval is from 15.6 to 20.8 (18.2 ± 1.645 times 1.6). If this procedure were followed for every possible sample, about 90 percent of the intervals would include the average from all possible samples.



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Fast Response Survey System

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202

Form approved
OMB No. 1850-0554
App. Exp. 2/85

**SURVEY OF PATRON USE OF COMPUTERS IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

This report is authorized by law (20 U.S.C. 1221e-1). While you are not required to respond, your cooperation is needed to make the results of this survey comprehensive, accurate, and timely.

**SCOPE:** Computers: Mainframes, minicomputers, microcomputers or personal computers, and terminals.

Library: A single unit, or a multiunit organization having branches and other outlets administered by a single director under a unified budget.

Answer only for your public library including any branches.

1. Does your public library currently make available to patrons one or more computers: ?

   A. For use in the library? Yes |__| No |__|

   B. For use outside the library? Yes |__| No |__|

   (If "no" to both (A) and (B), skip to Question 4)

2. For each of the following items, enter appropriate responses in column 1 if your library offers patrons within-library computer use; in column 2, if your library offers patrons outside-library computer use.

| Extent of patron use of computer hardware in your library | For use within library | For use outside library |
|---|---|---|
| A. Number of main and branch libraries offering computer use to patrons | _____ | _____ |
| B. Number of computers available for use by patrons | _____ | _____ |
| C. Duration of scheduling period (col. 1); of loan period (col. 2) | _____(hr.) | _____(day) |
| D. Predominant charge per scheduling period (col. 1); per loan period (col. 2) (enter "0" if no charge) | $ _____ | $ _____ |
| E. Average number of scheduling periods logged to patrons per week per computer during the last month | _____ | XXXXXX |
| F. Average number of loan periods logged to patrons per week per computer during the last month | XXXXXX | _____ |
| G. Approximate percent of patrons 18 years or older | _____ | _____ |

3. Enter the number of computers available for patron use in your library that were obtained in each of the following ways. If multiple sources per computer, list under the primary source.

   A. Purchased with local or State library funds/grants _____

   B. Purchased with Federal funds/grants _____

   C. Gift from benefactor/company _____

   D. Loaned by a private firm _____

   E. Leased from a company _____

   F. Other (specify) _____

4. Does your library currently have computer software that it makes available to patrons:

   A. For use in the library? Yes |__| No |__|

   B. For use outside the library? Yes |__| No |__|

   (If "no" to both (A) and (B), skip to Question 7)

5. Check whether each of the following types of software is available for patron use in your library. If available, check the frequency of usage (either in the library or borrowed for outside use).

| Type of software available to patrons in your library | Available: Yes | Available: No | Frequency of usage/borrowing: Heavy | Moderate | Light |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A. Introduction to computer concepts and computer science | | | | | |
| B. Basic skills (reading, writing, math) for persons under 18 years | | | | | |
| C. Other instructional software/games for persons under 18 years | | | | | |
| D. Instructional software for adult literacy | | | | | |
| E. Skill training (e.g., typing, accounting) and personal use (e.g., personal finance, word processing) | | | | | |
| F. Search by patron of free data bases (e.g., community information, catalog) | | | | | |
| G. Video games primarily for entertainment | | | | | |
| H. Patron's own software | XXXXXXXXXXXXX | | | | |
| I. Other (specify) | | | | | |

6. Did your library offer any training/orientation sessions on the use of your computer(s) in 1984? Yes |__| No |__|

   If yes, how many? _____ On the average, how long were these training sessions? _____ minutes

7. Enter a check in the appropriate column to indicate the priority to your library in the next year of each of the following plans relating to patron use of computers.

| Plan to initiate or increase | Priority: High | Moderate | Low or none |
|---|---|---|---|
| A. Number of computers for patron use | | | |
| B. Number of main or branch libraries offering computers for patron use | | | |
| C. Number and variety of software for patrons | | | |
| D. Number of trained staff to assist patrons with computers | | | |
| E. Efforts to promote patron use of computers (e.g., charges, scheduling) | | | |
| F. Offerings of training sessions on the use of computers | | | |
| G. Other (specify) | | | |

8. Total number of main and branch libraries in your public library _____

Person completing form _____ Title _____

Library _____ State _____ Phone ( ) _____

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